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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 001574

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CI](#)
SUBJECT: CHARGE PREVIEWS SECDEF VISIT WITH MINISTER OF
DEFENSE GONI

REF: STATE 135921

Classified By: Charge a.i. Carol Urban for reasons 1.5 (b and d).

Summary

[¶1.](#) (C) Defense Minister Goni expects to review the "excellent state of bilateral U.S.-Chile mil-mil relations" and hear the USG perspective on international affairs during next week's visit by the Secretary of Defense. MoD will also carefully review the USG counter-proposal on updating the 1996 U.S.-Chile Memorandum of Defense Cooperation. End Summary.

[¶2.](#) (U) Charge a.i. Urban paid a courtesy call September 26 on Minister of Defense Jose Goni, during which she previewed the October 3-5 visit of Secretary of Defense Gates. Goni was joined by General Marcos Lopez, the Deputy CJCS equivalent, and Maria Ines Ruz, advisor to the MoD on international affairs. The Charge was accompanied by the DATT, MILGRP CDR, and Acting DCM.

[¶3.](#) (C) Goni said the Secretary's visit would build on an already superb collaborative relationship. He noted he had worked very well with former Ambassador Kelly and inquired when his successor would arrive. Charge replied that Ambassador-designate Simons had appeared before the SFRC the day before for his confirmation hearings, which had gone well. Goni continued that he viewed the Secretary's visit as an important opportunity to amplify cooperation, noting that he hoped to sign with the Secretary two agreements while the latter was in Chile, one on reciprocal provision of health care, the other a Master Information Exchange Agreement (MIEA). The DATT clarified that while the agreement on health care is almost certainly ready for signing, it is not clear the MIEA would be ready by the time of the Secretary's visit.

[¶4.](#) (C) Charge observed that the Secretary very much looking forward to his visit, a "get acquainted opportunity," but also a chance to explore new areas for cooperation. She expressed appreciation for Chilean peacekeeping efforts in Haiti and GOC support for the recent extension of the MINUSTAH mandate. Goni said he expected the visit to consist of three parts: 1) A review of the mil-to-mil aspects of the bilateral relationship; 2) A working lunch to discuss Chile's internal political situation, regional developments, and to hear the Secretary's views on the international situation; and, 3) A chance for the Secretary to experience Chilean culture by attending a football (soccer) match between Chile's best known club (Colo Colo) and a visiting Colombian club (Millonarios). On the latter, DATT noted the Secretary's very heavy schedule, as well as security

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concerns, but said he would pass on the very gracious invitation.

15. (C) Charge provided Goni a copy of the USG counter-proposal to Chile's request to replace the 1996 U.S-Chile Memorandum of Defense Cooperation (reftel). Goni said he would carefully review the USG response. Acting DCM explained the USG draft had arrived only an hour before the meeting but that it would give the two sides another topic to discuss during the Secretary's visit. While it would be highly unlikely to reach agreement during that visit, perhaps the two sides could work to consensus with a view to signing when Minister Goni visited Washington in December or January. The very cordial meeting concluded with a brief review of the Secretary's planned schedule of activities in Santiago.

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